



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
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ALASKA GAME LAW NOW UNDER
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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On June 7, President Coolidge signed and made effective a Senate Joint Resolution transferring the administration of the Alaska game law from the Governor of the Territory to the United States Department of Agriculture, thereby enabling the Secretary of Agriculture to unite the administration of the Alaska game law with the one covering the land fur-bearing animals of the Territory.

For years the administration of the game law has been under the Secretary of the Interior who through the Governor of the Territory, has appointed the wardens and attended to other details of the field administration, while the Secretary of Agriculture has been vested with authority in the matter of restrictions over the killing and the taking and exportation of specimens either alive or dead of birds and animals for scientific or educational purposes. On the other hand, for years the administration of the laws protecting land fur-bearing animals in the Territory has been first under the Bureau of Fisheries, in the Department of Commerce, and later under the Biological Survey, in the Department of Agriculture. Each administration has been maintaining its own warden service, which has frequently resulted in duplication of wardens in the same district, while the very limited appropriations for the purpose left great areas of the Territory without any enforcement of either game or fur laws.

Transfer Is Recommended.

A few months ago when this situation came to the attention of the Secretary of the Interior he at once appreciated the ineffectiveness of such an arrangement and joined in approving this transfer from his department to the Department of Agriculture.

The Secretary of Agriculture has placed the game administration of the Territory with the Bureau of Biological Survey, which is proceeding to organize the service in the Territory, and for the first time a combined game and fur warden service will be established throughout the Territory, including a number of places which have never hitherto had anything of the kind.

In its administration of the fur laws the Bureau has found that educational work among the people, including some of the Eskimos and Indians, has been very effective in securing improved observance of the regulations. Every effort will be made to secure wardens whose standing in the community is such that they will be able to build up cooperation in the enforcement of the law.

Game Resources Valuable.

The game and fur resources of Alaska are among its most valuable natural assets. These are of special value to the native Indians and Eskimos. The game supplies food and skins for a variety of uses, while the furs find a ready cash market and thus help carry prospectors and others of scanty resources through the year.

Vast areas of Alaska are unfit for agriculture and will long remain a wilderness. Here the maintenance of the game and fur supply will provide a perpetual and valuable resource. With both the game and the fur law

administered by a single organization, it is believed great advance will be possible in building up and maintaining these resources.

The present game and fur laws have become obsolete and a new Alaska game law passed the Senate at the last session of Congress and has been favorably reported by the House Committee on Agriculture. When this becomes a law it will render it much easier to build up the game and fur resources of the Territory, which will mean so much to its future. Fortunately, within the last few years the people of the Territory have been gradually awakening to their real value and the need of conserving the game and fur resources.

During 1923 about \$2,000,000 worth of furs were taken in the Territory, and probably half that much more in game. Capitalizing this return on a 6 per cent basis gives a value of \$50,000,000 to these two resources at the present time. There is little doubt that both can be greatly increased.

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